Citizens Project

Freedom Watch

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WHEN "REFORM" BECOMES A DIRTY WORD

An education reform effort known as Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is drawing fire from right-leaning organizations, parents and community members who say the program threatens to replace their values with those imposed by the state. The temperature of the debate has left many pro-reform educators dazed and confused over what to do next.

Finding the words "education" and "controversy" in the same sentence is becoming increasingly commonplace. Whether it's the always tense issue of sex education, the old debate over creationism versus evolution or the relatively new firestorm around multiculturalism, the subject of public education threatens to join religion and politics as taboo in polite conversation.

Ironically, the divisiveness highlights the extent to which there is agreement: public education is serious business.

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This is no surprise to sociologist James Davison Hunter, who sees the debate over public education as part of a larger clash currently taking place in our culture. He explains in his book *Culture Wars*, "Because of the intrinsic link between public education and national identity" education is "a political and legal battleground."

Bob Simonds, president of the National Association of Christian Educators and Citizens for Excellence in Education, agrees. He sees the current debate over public education as "a clash of cultural views, a clash of religious beliefs, a clash of traditional values. More than all of those things, it's a clash of power."

> "Colorado, like other states, watches as the issue of education reform becomes a heated political battle."

Given such characterizations of the stakes involved in public education, talk of education reform is bound to raise a few eyebrows. A few eyebrows, and then some.

OBE: A moving target

Currently, education reformers march under an enormous banner known widely as "Outcome-Based Education" or "OBE." However, OBE is not something conveniently categorized under one heading. Education reform efforts may use OBE as a model or steer clear from it entirely, causing restructuring specifics to vary by district and state.

For critics, OBE brings with it a number of disconcerting associations, including critical thinking, multicultural education, pluralistic and cooperative learning and new age philosophy, to name a few. For them, the phrase "OBE" has been energized to symbolize what one anti-OBE organization has called "politically correct indoctrination."

Such hyperbole catches attention, but OBE proponents say it dangerously skews discussion.

OBE is described as a new way of educating students based upon the total quality movement which has swept through corporate America. OBE theory is based on the premise that schools should first determine what they want students to know and be able to do, then plot a course to meet that "outcome," measuring each step of the process. It differs from the traditional approach requiring students to complete a given number of years in each subject.

According to the Denver-based Education Commission of the States, at least 34 states are moving toward outcome-based restructuring, all with notable variety. In many respects, the definition of OBE is largely in the "eyes of the beholder," according to one Ohio legislator involved in education reform. "It means so many different things to different people."

The controversy often lies in the "outcomes" that accompany OBE-styled reform. While outcomes generally require students to demonstrate academic ends such as math and science skills, some outcomes have been perceived by critics as forcing attitudinal ends with which they disagree.

For example, one model outcomes program includes making sure students are "competent in major subject areas, including the arts and humanities" as well as "be socially responsible and contribute to the community." Critics are unlikely to take exception to competence in major subject areas, but they may be troubled by a teacher's view of social responsibility.

By design, OBE does not mandate attitudinal outcomes, but that hasn't slowed the onslaught of attacks from parents assuming that OBE will usher in the overt teaching of values, and that those values will undermine what they teach at home. In Colorado, that fear continues to be the driving force for the opponents of the state's efforts at education reform known as "Standards-based education."

The debate in Colorado

Colorado, like other states, watched as the issue of education reform became a heated political battle. Standards-Based Education, or House Bill-1313, passed the legislature in June of 1993, mandating the implementation of academic standards in every district by 1997.

HB-1313 was designed to avoid the pitfalls associated with OBE by dealing only with academic outcomes in reading, writing, civics, math, science, history, geography, art, music and physical education. Still, November's school board races saw more than one reference to OBE and HB-1313.

The Littleton school board race drew national attention as a contest between the eventual victors representing a "back to basics" approach and "reformers," described as OBE advocates. Sparks flew over OBE in Colorado Springs, especially in District 20, where one candidate ran and won by making education reform and OBE central issues.
The attacks leveled at OBE are remarkably similar for a program which contains such variety in its state-by-state implementation. Like much in education, the devil is in the details, or in the case of OBE, the "outcomes."

> "Perhaps the most repugnant aspect of OBE is the overriding philosophy that children 'belong' to the state."
>
> —Janet Parshall, Concerned Women for America

The values debate

The critics' perception that HB-1313 and OBE represent a shift from knowledge outcomes to values outcomes has dominated the discussion of standards-based education in Colorado.

Dwight Williams, president of Colorado's Citizens Organized For Foundation Education Excellence (COFFEE), points to the kind of outcomes he fears are most likely to surface in an OBE program: "The student will celebrate diversity and demonstrate respect for everyone." According to Williams, such outcomes represent a "curriculum of politically correct content and instruction."

Nationally, Christian right groups like the National Association of Christian Educators, Citizens for Excellence in Education, Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum and Concerned Women of America have been sounding the alarm about OBE in more dire terms.

"Most often, OBE is used as an insidious development to lock all children into state mind control—creating a robot citizenry, easily manipulated," warns Bob Simonds in a fundraising letter mailed by Citizens for Excellence in Education. Phyllis Schlafly calls it "liberal politically correct ideology," and the Rutherford Institute warns that OBE opens the door to teaching that "there is no God and that there are no absolutes."

Not so, claims OBE architect Dr. William Spady. He told Focus on the Family's *Citizen* magazine that "it's inappropriate to require kids to have certain values or attitudes." But for many, such assurances mean little given what *Citizen* magazine describes as "public education's leftward slant." As long as the standards are coming out of public education, says the Focus on the Family publication, parents should have "no confidence that their Judeo-Christian values will be underscored."

In Colorado, it's the law

Although state legislators struggled (140 amendments and four rewrites of the draft legislation) to keep attitudinal standards out of the legislation in order to avoid the political snafus encountered by other states, the legislation has been labeled and attacked as being dangerous OBE reform.

The state organization leading that charge, COFFEE, argues that supporters are trying to hide the real intentions of HB-1313, claiming "this law mandates the institution of OBE," further claiming that this fact has been "roundly denied by the education establishment..."

In general, the discussion of standards-based education in Colorado has become centered where the voices are loudest. As a result, education professionals are put in the often frustrating position of answering wild charges that have nothing to do with HB-1313 or OBE.

Judy Barnett, a school board candidate in Cheyenne District 12, recalls one conversation where she was asked if she supported OBE, described as a program where "a second grade teacher would tell her students that there is a lifestyle called homosexuality" and that students "can't go on to the third grade until he or she believes it's o.k."

"It's that sort of anecdotal, irrational view that all too often is being passed off as fact," said Barnett.

HB-1313: What it does

The great distance between creating "schools that reflect high expectations" as mandated by HB-1313, and schools which are "futurist and politically correct," as charged by COFFEE's president Dwight Williams, has inspired great confusion over what HB-1313 will do to education in Colorado.

Standards-based education is the Colorado Department of Education's answer to the growing problem of high school graduates leaving public education without the skills required by the job market.

HB-1313 creates a time-line for the Colorado Department of Education, state school board and an advisory council to work with local school districts in developing their own standards by January of 1997. Prior to this deadline, districts must first "seek input and work in cooperation with educators, parents, students, business persons, and members of the general community...representative of the cultural diversity of the district" to determine these standards.

> "They're not learning facts, they're not learning things. They are being conditioned to cooperate with their neighbor."
>
> —Radio Commentator Chuck Baker

Reform advocates point to this provision of the legislation, plus the fact that it sets no specific standards, to quell charges by groups like COFFEE that HB-1313 is state-imposed mind control.

Beyond the rhetoric

Amazingly, attacks on OBE go well beyond "value indoctrination." Free World Research, an organization in Des Moines, Iowa, published an analysis of OBE that alleged such reform is a "socialist/communist agenda for America," making comparisons to public schools in Nazi Germany.

Other charges show a striking disregard for the truth.

In his nineteen page analysis "The Layman's Guide to OBE," COFFEE's Dwight Williams cites a report by Dr. Robert Slavin, a Johns Hopkins education researcher, which allegedly proves that OBE "slowed the learning process." It's not the first time Slavin's research (which deals with another type of education reform) has been used to discredit OBE. Slavin writes: "Use of my review as evidence against OBE is totally irresponsible and inappropriate. I wish I could find a way to stop opponents of OBE from using my research out of context."

When data is misused, and charges of hidden agendas and covert action are aimed at educators, real discussions about improving public education become difficult, if not impossible. When critics use blanket indictments to discredit varied teaching techniques, all that results is confusion.

Clearly, a necessary component of education reform is public evaluation. If this public evaluation is to be meaningful, then the views of parents on both sides of the so-called culture war must be respected, and included. Discussions like this can occur only when we move beyond charged symbolism.

The provision of HB-1313 for community input, now in use by local school districts to identify standards, provides an important opportunity for the community to explore common objectives and values.

How do groups with differing worldviews find common ground in this tricky corner of the public square? Carefully, explains Charles Haynes of the conservative First Liberty Institute. "The starting point for local districts and communities must be an agreement on civic ground rules," which he describes as the three R's of "Rights, Responsibilities and Respect." It means acknowledging the legitimacy of all perspectives, with an eye toward openness and inclusion.

Emotion around education is not likely to fade. The challenge of finding ways to live with our diversity promises to be a central feature of education in the 21st century, both locally and nationally. In all the confusion, one thing is glaringly apparent: failure to find an amicable solution could cause great harm to perhaps the most vital of all our public institutions.

—Michael Shaver

Citizens Project has prepared an issue paper discussing OBE and HB-1313 in more detail. If you are interested in receiving a copy, mail $2 with your name and address to Citizens Project. Please mention the OBE paper in your request.

Announcements

❑ Spirituality Symposium Draws National Scholars.

The 1994 Colorado College Symposium on "Spirituality and Religion" will explore such questions as: Is there something in human nature itself that demands a dimension of life beyond everyday reality? Why is the satisfaction of even the best in human relations — love, friendship, the search for social justice — sometimes not enough? What accounts for the rise of religious fundamentalism in this country and throughout the world? A number of the most thoughtful and prominent figures from the intellectual and cultural life of our country are coming to Colorado College January 19-22 to discuss these and other significant issues. For more information and a schedule of events, call the Worner Center Information Desk at 389-6606.

❑ Symposium Explores Nonviolence.

The Symposium on Nonviolence: Head, Heart, & Soul at Colorado College, February 24-27, will provide information and inspiration to those new to thinking about alternatives to violent conflict. The speakers, artists and workshop leaders will explain how nonviolence is an active response to the many types of conflicts plaguing our world, nation, and community. They will also demonstrate that nonviolence is more than a response to war; it is a way of life. Child care available with advance reservations. For more information call the Writing Center, 389-6742.

Then & Now

On the always "in the future" breakdown of the American family:

1869: *"The conclusive objection to the political enfranchisement of women is, that it would weaken and finally break up and destroy the Christian family...and when the family goes, the nation goes too, or ceases to be worth preserving."*

— Orestes Brownson, writing in the *Catholic World*, 1869.

1994: *"We oppose the gay rights agenda because it redefines the family and destroys the basic fabric of civilized society."*

— Chuck Colson, *Focus on the Family* magazine, January 1994.

"COR" VALUES COME TO TOWN

The unique mix of religious organizations here in Colorado Springs will soon include a new and uncompromising "traditional values" Christian ministry. Dr. Jay Grimstead, director of the California-based Coalition on Revival (COR), announced in a December 4th letter to supporters that COR will relocate to Colorado Springs in June.

Once here, COR plans to immediately establish a new training school, Kingdom College. Kingdom College, says Dr. Grimstead, will be a "boot-camp training school for radical world-changers," where students will experience "hand-to-hand combat intellectually and spiritually." The purpose of Kingdom College, according to COR's brochure, is to train Christians to "systematically and effectively rebuild their civilization on Biblical principles."

COR is composed of Christian Reconstructionists who believe the Bible requires Christians to bring about a new Christian theocracy. COR's stated vision is to "see Christians everywhere doing all they can in the power of the Holy Spirit to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ in every aspect of life."

COR's 1990 list of its 107 steering committee members includes several leaders from the political Christian right such as Beverly LeHaye of Concerned Women For America, Rev. Donald Wildmon of the American Family Association, Dr. Robert Simonds of Citizens for Excellence in Education, Gary DeMar of American Vision, Dr. James Kennedy (who in conjunction with Village Seven Presbyterian Church is opening a branch of Knox Theological Seminary here), Dr. Gary North, and Dr. R.J. Rushdoony. Dr. Rushdoony is the acknowledged godfather of the Christian Reconstructionist movement and a force behind COR's vision. Affiliation with COR is controversial; some committee members now deny any connection with COR, and others have subsequently left that committee.

What Bible-based perspectives will COR bring to Colorado Springs? In general, reconstructionists emphasize "absolute morality" and the continued relevance of Old Testament laws to today's civil government. In practice, those biblical laws are interpreted by some reconstructionists to support ultra-conservative political policies, including policies to abolish the public education system, put American currency back on the gold standard, and to expand the death penalty. According to Rushdoony, the Old Testament mandates the death penalty for 18 different offenses, including striking or cursing a parent, unchastity, witchcraft, incorrigible delinquency of a child, blasphemy, propagation of false doctrines, homosexuality, and adultery.

While reconstructionists are not always in agreement, similar themes emerge:

On Democracy. "Democracy is the great love of the failures and cowards of life." R. J. Rushdoony, *Thy Kingdom Come,* p. 39 (1978).

On Theocracy. "We believe that institutionally, Christianity should be the official religion of the country, that its laws should be specifically Christian." David Chilton, quoted in Bill Moyers' *God And Politics* television special (December 23, 1987).

On Religious Pluralism. "We deny that Christianity is to serve merely as one among many mildly leavening influences within a pluralistic culture or world." COR, *The Christian World View of Educating Christians,* p. 11 (1986). "Christianity offers the only path to the one true God. To hold that the Christian religion is not better than Buddhism or Judaism is blasphemy." John Whitehead, *The Separatist Illusion,* p. 115 (1982).

On True Christians. "From the 1960's on, corrupted, devious professors who became neo-orthodox (Karl Barth's theology) have infiltrated Christian seminaries, Christian colleges and churches to the point that a large percentage of 'evangelical' professors and pastors are now neo-orthodox and have rejected the inerrancy of the Bible...[We must] clean out the theological 'germs' which now are running rampant in the bloodstreams of most denominations and evangelical schools." Jay Grimstead, "Ideas Have Consequences," Spring/Summer 1993 *Crosswinds,* p. 3.

On Judaism. "Rushdoony identified the underlying problem a generation ago: 'Judaism grew out of the rejection of Jesus Christ and steadily became humanism, and the Talmud is essentially the exposition of humanism under the facade of Scripture.'" Gary North, *The Judeo-Christian Tradition,* p. 152 (1989).

On Tolerance. "This must be clearly understood: Orthodox, Biblical Christianity is intolerant." David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance,* p. 113 (1987).

On Hating the Sin. "The notion that one can hate sin and love the sinner is a contradiction. True, this idea that it can be done is commonplace, but it is an evidence of moral degeneracy." Rushdoony, *The Foundations of Social Order,* p. 108 (1978). "God tells us that sinners deserve His wrath. He is a holy God, who despises both sin and the sinner." Gary North, *Unconditional Surrender,* p. 61.

While COR's drive to make America a Christian theocracy is at the extreme end of the spectrum, reconstructionist tenets resonate in the agendas of some of today's less extreme political-religious groups as they crusade to make Christianity a "more equal" religion and work toward a closer identity between government and conservative Christianity. Sara Diamond, author of *Spiritual Warfare: The Politics of the Christian Right,* states that reconstructionism "has become the central unifying ideology of the Christian right."

Although COR is a small group, its uncompromising biblical vision will add new sparks to our diverse and sometimes volatile Colorado Springs political-religious scene. Some local Christian leaders will likely distance themselves from COR's brand of alienating Christianity. Other leaders or organizations, depending on their interest and the commonality between their agendas and COR's, will remain neutral or may even embrace COR as an ally in their drive to impose "traditional values" and a conservative "Christian morality" on all Americans. And finally, should it ever move from planning to reality, COR's new Kingdom College "boot camp" may promote an expansion of radical Christian militancy here that will likely prove unwelcome to most of our community.

Only time will tell, and Citizens Project will keep you informed.

— Doug Triggs

News Briefs

CFV funds out of state groups.

Colorado For Family Values (CFV) sent $390,000 to Cincinnati's Citizens for Community Values (CCV) to promote successful passage of an anti-gay law in Cincinnati last November. This contribution provided 79% of the funding for the anti-gay CCV group. Some charged CFV with becoming a conduit for anti-gay groups throughout the United States to make concealed contributions. Will Perkins stated that CFV will continue using out-of-state contributions to finance anti-gay campaigns in other states. CFV director Kevin Tebedo recently traveled to Austin, Texas to assist a group trying to revoke that city's ordinance which extends benefits to the city's gay employees, and CFV may also funnel money to these anti-gay groups.

CFV misses on family values.

After hearing weeks of detailed testimony in the Amendment 2 trial, Judge Bayless questions the connection between CFV's Amendment 2 and family values. The judge's order made this finding: "Seemingly, if one wished to promote family values, action would be taken that is pro-family rather than anti some other group. The tie-in between the interest of protecting the family and denying gays and bisexuals the right to political participation was not made." *If you would like to read the 16-page text of Judge Bayless' decision, send $2 (and your name and address) to Citizens Project, and we will send a copy to you.*

Diversity in the military.

The U.S. military now has a Muslim chaplain, the first non-Judeo-Christian chaplain ever. This comes in response to the growing number of Muslims in the United States and the U.S. military. Muslims now constitute the eighth largest religious denomination in the United States. Buddhists are now also requesting a military chaplain.

Theocracy threatens Christians.

The Islamic government of Pakistan has legislation making all citizens subject to the laws of the Koran, the Muslim holy book. Among other restrictions, the laws punish blasphemy with a possible sentence of death. An 11-year old Christian boy now has been accused of blasphemy against the Islamic religion. "Because I am a Christian, because I believe in Christ, I am suffering," he said. His first attorney resigned when Islamic clerics threatened to burn down his office. Pakistan's push for more religion in the public arena is not always tolerant of, nor welcomed by, non-Muslim religious minorities. Although there is some sentiment in Pakistan to moderate these intolerant religious-based laws, clerics and religious groups there are vocal, well-organized, and influential beyond their numbers.

School prayer nixed.

Bishop Knox, the principal at a public high school in Jackson, Mississippi has been fired for allowing students to recite a Christian prayer over the school's public address system. The prayer question had been put to a school-wide vote, and a majority of the students voted to have daily prayer broadcast throughout the school via the intercom system. Although the school attorney had advised that such prayers were constitutionally impermissible, the principal, a self-described "committed Christian," permitted the prayers for three days before the superintendent intervened. The decision for school-wide prayers received strong support from the American Family Association and Christians Revolutionizing America for Christ. Said Knox: "We want institutions to acknowledge God." The local ACLU expressed concern: "There were at least 96 students who voted against prayer...It is an infringement of at least 96 students' religious liberties." The principal will be allowed to return to his job next summer.

Books hijacked to promote morality.

Cathy Hollifield, an activist with Concerned Women For America, checked out 18 books from her Cleveland, Tennessee public library and refused to return them. The books, she said, were "pornographic and Satanic." The hijacked books included *Everything You Need to Know About Teen Pregnancy* and *Teens With Aids Speak Out.* A local minister said, "if there are adults in Bradley County that need to go to the library to get that kind of garbage, the Sheriff's Department needs their addresses."

Legal Updates

Involuntary baptism suit grows.

The lawsuit against Rev. Dean Miller and Cornerstone Baptist Church for the baptism of children without their parents' consent has ballooned. The original lawsuit was brought by the parents of four children after Cornerstone advertised a free carnival for kids, and then baptized some of the attending children. Now the parents and guardians of over twenty children have joined the Cornerstone suit, alleging violation of their rights to be involved with the religious upbringing of their children. Cornerstone's defense, among others, is that the children attending the church carnival chose to be baptized. Cornerstone and Rev. Miller have engaged a Denver law firm to defend them and are asking for a jury trial. A trial, should it take place, will pit the fundamentalist church's aggressive policy to "save souls for Christ" against the rights of families in raising their children.

Religious freedom expanded.

President Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in November. This act requires that government actions which impinge on religious practice do so in a way that results in the least possible burden on religious freedom. The government must now show a "compelling interest" before denying a person's religious liberty, regardless of the form of religion practiced. The American Civil Liberties Union and a number of evangelical and Christian groups pushed for passage of the law. This legislation was prompted by a 1990 Supreme Court ruling that the government could regulate use of the drug Peyote in Native American religious ceremonies. Other religions then became nervous about the government's right to interfere with their religious practices, resulting in across-the-board support for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Inside CP

❑ **Important — Deadline Approaching.** To participate in the April party caucuses, you must be registered with either the Republican or Democratic parties by February 5th. For more information, contact your local party.

❑ **Bigger, Better Board.** Citizens Project is pleased to welcome Peg Bacon, Bruce Coriell, and Greg Walta to the Board of Directors. Peg Bacon is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at UCCS, where she served as Dean from 1987 to 1993. Peg has served on the boards of the Public Education Coalition and the Urban League. Bruce Coriell, Chaplain of Colorado College, is the chair and board member of the Martin Luther King Holiday Committee, and a founding member of the Pikes Peak Interfaith Council. Greg Walta is a prominent Colorado Springs attorney and longtime civil rights activist. Greg authored the "Walta Clarification Amendment" on Amendment 2. As an Evangelical Christian, Greg brings an important perspective to the board of directors.

❑ **Staff Changes.** We are pleased to present five staff members for the price of two: Mike Shaver and Marj Webster, co-Directors; Shelley Anckner, Support Coordinator; Dorothy Becker, Administrative Coordinator; and Christine Beserra, Research Coordinator. Mike and Dorothy you already know; Marj is a Colorado Springs native with an M.B.A from the University of Chicago; Shelley is a longtime volunteer with Citizens Project, with a B.A. in liberal studies; Christine was born and raised in Colorado Springs, and received her Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Illinois.

❑ **Welcome Meeting Site Changed.** Our next (and last—see our new monthly series, page 7) Introduction to Citizens Project meeting will be Wednesday, January 19, 7:00 at the Cheyenne Mountain Branch Library (not Rockrimmon as originally advertised) located at 1791 8th St. All are invited to come and discuss how we can work together to shape the Colorado Springs community.

❑ **Dialogue Dinners Planned.** Citizens Project is part of a coalition that hopes to explore our differences and our common ground through Dialogue Dinners, bringing together people from different worldviews to discuss community issues. About 40 people will act as guinea pigs for the first round of dinners early in 1994. In the spring, we hope to broaden the number of participants to reach all who are interested in dialogue as a way of challenging stereotypes and approaching differences without enmity. Look for details on how you can host or attend a dinner in future editions of *Freedom Watch.*

❑ **CP Presents Monthly Meetings.** Citizens Project is pleased to announce monthly meetings featuring engaging discussions on a variety of issues. Upcoming programs include the GT's Chuck Asay and Dan Griswold, and training for the political caucuses, among others. See the notice on page 7 for details.

❑ **Attention Freedom Watch Subscribers.** If you are on our mail list, and you do not wish to receive phone calls about upcoming events, community information, or other issues, please contact Shelley Anckner at the office.

Volunteer Needs

Please call Marj at the office, 520-9899, to get involved!

❑ **Festival of Learning — January 28-31, 1994.** We need artists and craftspeople to design, build, and install our exhibit prior to the event; individuals to staff the booth; and volunteers to disassemble the booth following the festival.

❑ **Going Ape Over Teachers.** For our winter fundraising party (see page 7), we need hardworking people to serve on the following committees: decorating, refreshments, advertising and registration, entertainment, and clean-up. We also need people with professional bartending skills. Volunteers will get complimentary tickets.

❑ **Good Citizens Needed.** Citizens Project is establishing a community service group called "Good Citizens." Our first project will be to join the "Adopt a Park" program of the City Parks and Recreation Department. The city will place a sign on the area we adopt crediting Citizens Project with the upkeep. If you can offer a few hours each month to pick up trash at a city park, median, or playground, contact Jay Norman, 260-5966, or the Citizens Project office. Be a good citizen—join now!

❑ **Expertise Wanted.** We need people with experience organizing Walk-a-thons or Silent Auctions to help us with upcoming events in 1994.

❑ **Office Volunteers Needed.** If you have a morning or afternoon free, we could use help answering phones, and other office activities. Please contact Marj Webster at the office.

Neighborhood Group News

❑ **80904/05 Now Called "Citizens West."** Citizens West wants to know how many families in the 80904/05 zip code area would attend a potluck in February. Besides sharing a meal, our goals are to build community and to discuss possible agendas. All in favor of a potluck, call Linda 578-0786. If you are interested in discussing school issues, call Jody, 633-6545.

❑ **80918 Sponsors Essay Contest.** $100 will go to the high school student who submits the most compelling essay on "how the Bill of Rights helps us defend our freedom." Any student in any U.S. high school may compete. Essays will be judged on quality of writing; references to the Bill, to published analyses of it, and to its effects on our society; expression of personal opinions; and date of entry. Deadline for submissions is April 1, 1994; the winner will be announced April 21. To enter, send your name, grade level, address, and name of high school to: 80918 Neighborhood Group, PO Box 26523, Colorado Springs, CO 80936. Your date of entry will be recorded, and you will be sent a registration packet with further details. The group is also seeking teachers and writers to evaluate the essays, and sponsors to offer additional prizes. For more information contact Gary Betchan, (719) 548-0882.

❑ **80909 to Meet in January.** 80809 will meet at the Cheyenne Mountain Branch Library immediately following the CP Introductory Meeting, which is on Wednesday, January 19, at 7:00. Call Stacia at 444-0133, or Michael at 633-8539, for more information.

Neighborhood Groups are independent groups of citizens working together in a manner consistent with the mission and vision of Citizens Project.

WATCH YOUR MAILBOX

Citizens Project is celebrating the importance of public education with our "Goin' Ape Over Teachers" benefit. You will receive an invitation in February, and we really want to see you there. We also need volunteers (see page 6).

N31

I AGREE! We must promote increased tolerance and compassion for others in our community. I want to join the thousands of concerned residents who signed-up to stay informed and to challenge intolerant activities.

[ ] Please add my name to your mailing list. I look forward to receiving Freedom Watch, the Citizens Project newsletter.

[ ] I have enclosed a contribution in support of your mission and to help offset the cost of printing and mailing. Here is a check for:

[ ] $20 [ ] $35 [ ] $50 [ ] $100 Other $ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please return to: Citizens Project, Box 2085, Colorado Springs, CO 80901
Because we lobby to protect civil liberties, contributions are not tax-deductible.

Gazette Telegraph Editorial Team Talks to Citizens Project

Due to popular demand, Citizens Project will combine our introductory and general meetings into monthly "First Tuesday" discussions for both newcomers and old-timers.

❑ **Tuesday, February 1.** If you've ever wondered what's behind the Opinion Pages of the GT, now's your chance to talk to Dan Griswold, Opinion Page Editor, and Chuck Asay, Political Cartoonist.

❑ **Tuesday, March 1.** In preparation for the Democratic and Republican caucuses in early April, we'll discuss with both parties how caucuses work and how you can get involved!

❑ **Tuesday, April 5.** Details to be announced.

❑ **Tuesday, May 3.** Don't miss a discussion of the book, *Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivializes Religious Devotion*. Harvey Martz, Senior Minister at Calvary United Methodist Church, will lead the discussion. Books can be purchased at Poor Richards Bookstore with a 20% discount when you mention CP.

Meetings are 7 to 9 P.M. at the East Library Information Center.

Citizens Project

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Our Mission: *Citizens Project is a grassroots organization in the Pikes Peak region dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state.*

Our Vision: *We envision a community committed to working beyond ignorance, prejudice and fear, where differences are respected, individual rights are protected and diversity is celebrated.*

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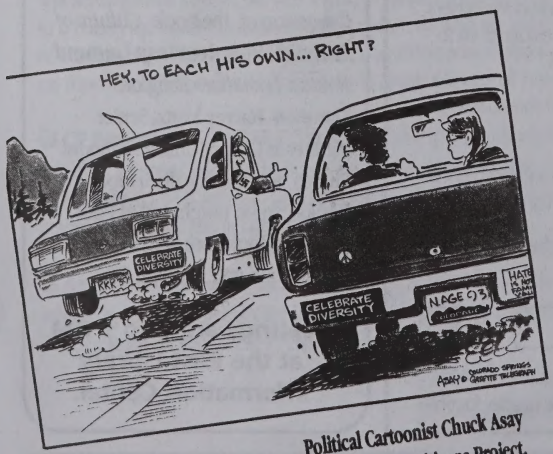

Political Cartoonist Chuck Asay talks to Citizens Project.
See page 7.